

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A method to reduce the likelihood of the occurrence of false outcomes of a test for detecting the presence or absence of prion protein in a biological sample comprising providing the sample with a substrate and a proteolytic enzyme and contacting the enzyme with said substrate to allow conversion of the substrate by the enzyme into a detectable product allowing monitoring the activity of said enzyme in a test sample.
2. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein said false outcomes comprise a false-positive outcome.
3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~claims 1 or 2~~ wherein the outcome of said test essentially relies on the activity of said enzyme.
4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 3~~ wherein the activity of said enzyme in said test sample may be affected by an internal and/or external factor.
5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~claims 1 to 4~~ wherein said test comprises digestion of prion protein and wherein the size of prion protein following digestion is not monitored.
6. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of claims 1 to 5~~ wherein said test comprises determining the presence of a prion protein in a sample using an antibody reactive with a prion protein.
7. (Original) A method according to claim 6 wherein said antibody reacts with both the normal and the pathogenic prion protein.
8. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of the preceding claims~~ wherein said proteolytic enzyme is proteinase K or a functionally equivalent protease.

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9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of the preceding claims~~ wherein said substrate is suitable for digestion by proteinase K.
10. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ wherein said substrate is a chymotrypsin substrate.
11. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ wherein said substrate is casein-resorufin.
12. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ wherein said substrate is N-succinyl-Ala-Ala-Pro-Phe-p-NitroAnilide (SAAPPN).
13. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ wherein said substrate has an enzymatic label.
14. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ wherein said substrate is a fluorescent protein.
15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 ~~anyone of claims 1 to 9~~ wherein said substrate is a radiolabelled protein.
16. (Currently Amended) Use of a method according to Claim 1 ~~anyone of the preceding claims~~ to monitor protease activity in each individual test sample in a test which essentially depends on proteolytic digestion so that the reliability of the outcome of such a test can be determined for each test sample.